

EDUCATION

ISRAEL 1954

The creation of a homogenous nation from more than 50 different communities, speaking almost as many languages, and reared in an astounding variety of cultural, social and economic backgrounds, is among the most difficult of the many arduous tasks facing the new State since its inception. To reach this extraordinary goal, education of children and adults, must play a leading role.

The State of Israel inherited the basis of its modern system of education from the Jewish community of Palestine. But what there was in the educational field represented little more than a nucleus of the vast program which now had to be undertaken. Not only were new buildings and equipment essential, but teachers had to be trained almost overnight to cope with a nearly fourfold increase in the number of pupils attending school.

From May, 1948 to May, 1954, school attendance grew from 98,000 to over 365,000.

Compulsory Education

Despite the manifold problems which faced the new State on all sides, the Government decided that universal education must receive priority.

In September 1949, the Knesset (Parliament) passed the Compulsory Education Law, establishing universal, free and compulsory primary education for all children from 5 to 14, without distinction of religion, race or sex. The law also stipulated that youths, between 14 and 18 years of age, who had not for any reason completed their

elementary eight-year schooling must attend special classes at evening schools.

Owing to budgetary difficulties in 1953, the Government, with the approval of the Knesset (Parliament), found itself compelled to ask parents to contribute to the maintenance of kindergarten education for five-year-olds. The rate of such payment is fixed on a sliding scale accordig to parental means. The Jewish Agency has accepted responsibility for payment of this year of kindergarten education in immigrant settlements.

State Education Law

During the Mandatory period, education for the Jewish population was organized on a voluntary community basis, which had resulted in the establishment of four networks, or 'trends': "General," "Labor," "Mizrachi" and "Agudat Israel." This system persisted during the first five years of statehood, but in August 1953, the Knesset finally passed the "State Education Law" which abolished this "trend" system, and set up a unified state education in kindergartens and elementary schools subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture. In addition, the government provides for state religious education. These institutions are religious with respect to curriculum, way of life, teachers and inspectors.

The educational philosophy of the unified education system is defined in the Law as follows: "The state educational system aims to base fundamental education in the state on values of the heritage of Israel and the achievements of science, on love for the country and fealty to the state of Israel and the Jewish people, on training in agriculture and manual labor, on pioneering, and on striving towards the creation of a society built on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual help and love of mankind."

The curricula may be supplemented and varied at the request of the majority of parents of a particular school by additional courses of studies, provided that non-Jewish educational institutions will be adapted to the special conditions and requirements of respective communities. Teachers must not engage in political activities or indoctrination among students.

An Educational Committee advises the Minister on matters pertaining to the educational system. Committee members are nominated by the Minister of Education for a four-year period from educators, representatives of institutions of higher learning, representatives of the teachers' union and the municipal governments.

A Council for Religious State Education has also been established to advise the Minister of Education and Culture on matters pertaining to religious education. The members of this Council are nominated by the Minister of Education from lists of candidates submitted by the Minister for Religious Affairs, organizations representing religious teachers and religious members of the Educational Committee.

Private schools may operate outside the network of State schools, provided that the curricula, teaching standards, and buildings are approved by the Ministry of Education. Such schools are eligible for financial assistance. Some schools, previously belonging to the Agudat Israel "trend" have taken advantage of this leeway and have formed a separate school network, involving some 14,000 pupils.

Education Budget

The increasing emphasis on education in the life of the State can be gauged by the following figures which illustrate increase for education in the State budget:

1949-50	5.6% of the State budget
1952-53	6.9% " " " "
1953-54	10.0% " " " "
1954-55 (Budget estimates)	13.0% " " " "

The actual allocation for education in the 1954/55 Budget estimates is IL. 33,744,000.

Educational Facilities

Israel's school system provides continuous education from kindergarten to university.

KINDERGARTENS

About 70% of all children between the age of 3-6 attend kindergarten. This percentage is among the highest in the world and is far higher than in most European countries.

By using Hebrew as the everyday language and so helping the youngsters to achieve a common way of life, kindergartens have been of inestimable value.



Since 1948, there has been an almost fourfold increase in the number of children attending kindergartens:

<u>1948-49</u>	<u>1953-54</u>
16,695 children	60,000 children
426 kindergartens	1,300 kindergartens

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Attendance at Elementary School, now compulsory for all children from 6 to 14, has trebled in the past six years:

<u>1948-49</u>	<u>1953-54</u>
71,542 pupils	215,000 pupils
342 schools	885 schools

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Since 1948 the number of pupils attending secondary schools has more than doubled:

<u>1948-49</u>	<u>1953-54</u>
6,442 pupils	15,000 pupils
37 schools	79 schools

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING

The twin tasks of achieving agricultural self-sufficiency and of training a skilled community of farmers lends special significance to agricultural schooling in Israel. In addition to the activities of various organizations and to the practical training of adult immigrants in farm settlements, the Government has considerably increased facilities for fundamental agricultural education. In 1948, for example, there were 2,395 pupils, receiving instruction in 14 agricultural schools. In 1953 there were 39 agricultural schools giving instruction to 6,000 students.

The Hebrew University has a Faculty of Agriculture, and the Israel Institute of Technology has opened a special department of Agricultural Engineering.



VOCATIONAL TRAINING

With the establishment of the State, all vocational training schools, founded by various organizations, came under Governmental supervision. These schools have proven of vital importance in providing Israel's expanding industry with skilled artisans.

The 17 Institutions in 1948/49, with their 1,829 students have grown to 48 institutions with more than 5,000 pupils today.

EVENING CLASSES FOR WORKING YOUTH

Evening classes, established by various bodies during the Mandatory period, became a State responsibility with the passage of the Compulsory Education Law, and in 1950 81 evening schools with 6,000 students came under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. 12,000 pupils attend 250 evening schools at present.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

During the past six years many former students and teachers of Yeshivot (religious seminaries), destroyed by the Nazis, arrived in Israel. As a result, many Yeshivot were enlarged and several new ones created.

There are also a number of Talmud Torah schools which provide traditional Jewish education. The number of pupils at religious schools and Yeshivot is estimated at 5,000.

Teachers' Training

The vast increase in the number of pupils attending schools necessitated a proportionate increase in the number of teachers. This was no easy problem, for the number of trained teachers among the new immigrants was extremely low, and even potentially good teachers first had to learn Hebrew. The critical shortage was partially remedied by the opening of additional training colleges and short extensive training courses. The number of teachers in 1949 was 4,980. Today, there are more than 15,000.

Implementation of the State Education Law enabling the merging of classes, schools and teachers' training colleges, resulted in a certain economy of personnel. The short courses instituted for training teachers during the period of gravest shortage were later abolished, and students must now spend 2 years in a Teachers' Training College after having graduated from secondary school, before



Agricultural training in youth village

they can qualify. During 1953/54, 2,090 students were being trained in 18 such colleges.

An important development in teacher training was the opening of the School of Education in 1952 under the joint auspices of the Ministry of Education and the Hebrew University.

Educational Activities of the Army

The emphasis on education is one of the most impressive and distinctive qualities of the Israel Defence Forces. The Israel Defence Forces are probably the largest single adult education institution in the country. The bulk of its men and women—particularly of conscripts and reservists—are comparatively new immigrants. Few know Hebrew when they enter Israel. Many are from countries where they were unable to acquire even an elementary education. The Israel Defence Forces not only train these men and women as efficient defenders, but also as enlightened citizens. A considerable part of the Israel Defence Forces training program pro-

vides soldiers with a basic education and teaches them Hebrew. Other educational activities include teachers courses, educational and art institutes and agricultural colleges. The Israel Army runs scores of specialized courses in many technical trades in order to prepare the soldier for civilian life.

To many of the soldiers the Army represents the gateway to a modern democratic society. The conscript after completing his term of national service is a far more integrated citizen than the immigrant lacking this vital experience.

Adult Education

On the adult level a network of evening classes reaching out into every settlement and immigrants' camp is designed to meet the urgent demand of the immigrants for the study of Hebrew as well as their need for civil and general education. Professionals, such as lawyers, engineers, doctors, teachers, technicians and skilled immigrants who have had a high school education, are provided with intensive courses in Hebrew in special schools. These schools, which are called "Ulpanim" (houses of learning), and are located both in urban and rural areas, include room and board, and last five months, with 30 hours a week instruction, and the rest devoted to self study. The "Ulpanim" have proved an effective means for the speedy absorption of the more educated among the immigrants and at the same time help to provide the country with much needed skilled personnel.

Other forms of intensive study of Hebrew are the part-time Ulpanim in agricultural settlements, where students work half a day to earn their keep and study the rest of the day. In the cities there are Popular and Junior Ulpan courses in the evenings for people who have to work during the day. These vary from 24-hour a week courses lasting for 6 months to 4-hours a week courses lasting for 20 months. A mobile Ulpan visits outlying settlements for various periods of time.

Altogether, in all these types of Ulpanim, there were at the end of 1953 18,755 enrolled students. These courses are either directly maintained by the Government, or operated in conjunction with local authorities or public bodies. The full Ulpan courses are conducted in conjunction with the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

In March 1952 a Supreme Culture Council was constituted, with one of its main tasks the propagation of the Hebrew language. A draft law has been prepared to help the Council in this task, and



Village schoolroom

a "Hebrew Language and Culture Volunteers' Association" was formed which took upon itself the execution of this task.

During 1954-55, the seventh year of Israel's independence, which has been proclaimed "Hebrew Language Year," a major effort will be made to see that everyone in Israel aged 18 years and over obtains a knowledge of elementary written and spoken Hebrew, with a basic vocabulary of 1,000 words. A voluntary mass movement, comprising every qualified citizen who has sufficient knowledge of Hebrew to teach others, is the method considered likely to achieve that goal.

Advanced Adult Education

There is a wide net of institutes, courses, schools and classes of adult education all over the country. They are sponsored by a variety of organizations such as the Hebrew University, the Histadrut (the General Federation of Labor), the Government and the local authorities. Their curriculum comprises Hebrew and foreign languages, subjects in humanities, social sciences and natural history.



Laboratory at Hebrew University — Hadassah Medical School

Most of these centers of instruction operate on a year-round basis; others are special spring and summer courses. At the Hebrew University a special Centre for Adult Education has been set up, and the adult education movement is expanding constantly, with the addition of more classes, more subjects and the opening of courses at new localities.

Arab Education

During the Mandatory period, Arab schooling in Palestine was provided by the Government and by Mission and Community Schools. But education was not general among the Arabs and the degree of illiteracy was high, especially among girls. After the War of Independence, the Israel Government turned its attention to the problem of educating Arab children, for the Compulsory Education Law covers all children in Israel, irrespective of religion, race or sex.

In the 1953/54 school year, about 26,000 children were enrolled



Agricultural drawing class at Haifa Technion

in 107 Government Arab schools, and taught by 700 teachers. In 1948/49 the comparable figures were 7,417 children, 186 teachers. About 80% of the total Arab population of school age now attends school, a higher percentage than in any Moslem country. This number will be increased to 100% as soon as more Arab teachers are trained, more schools built and as soon as Arab parents cooperate by seeing that their children, including their daughters, attend school.

A special college for training Arab teachers is maintained by the Ministry of Education. Arab schools are run not only in towns and villages, but also in Beduin encampments.

Higher Education

HEBREW UNIVERSITY

The Hebrew University suffered a crushing blow when its buildings on Mount Scopus were cut off from the rest of Jewish Jerusalem as a result of the war in 1948. Arrangements were made, however, to carry on in temporary premises and, in 1949, the Uni-

versity resumed work with 900 students. Two new faculties—Medicine and Law—were added in 1949. During the past year, the Medical School expanded with the addition of Departments of Dentistry and Pharmacology, and a sixth faculty, the Eliezer Kaplan School of Economics and Social Science was inaugurated. The number of students at the University now totals 3,100, including 250 research students.

The academic staff consists of 76 Professors and Assistant Professors, 123 Lecturers and Tutors, 187 Assistant and 70 Visiting Tutors.

THE ISRAEL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

The Israel Institute of Technology, popularly known as the Haifa Technion, which provides the technical and scientific personnel urgently required in the building of the new State, is attended by 1,320 students in its 5 departments: Civil Engineering, Architecture, Mechanical Engineering, Electric Engineering, Chemical Engineering and Sciences.

More than half of the engineers and architects practising in the country today are graduates of the Technion.

SCHOOL OF LAW AND ECONOMICS

The School of Law and Economics in Tel Aviv has some 1,000 students attending courses of three faculties (Law, Economics, Political Science) and the Institute of Auditing. The School also offers extension courses in Haifa attended by some 200 students.

WEIZMANN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

Post graduate students in the pure sciences are able to pursue their studies and undertake research work for their doctoral degrees at the Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot.

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